

# Scottish Planner

The Journal of RTPI Scotland

# SP

Summer Issue / #193 / July 2023

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Best plan - Aberdeen Net Zero Roadmap

**net  
zero**  
Aberdeen

Best Project -  
University of Glasgow Western Campus

Young Planner of the Year -  
Sarah Purves

Overall Winner - Zetland Park Project

Planning Authority of the Year -  
Strategic Place Planning Service, Aberdeen City Council

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## Contents

2	Editorial – Jenny Divine
3	Convenor’s Comments – Kirsty Macari
4-5	30 Years of PAS - Johanna Boyd
6	Public Enquiries – Ian Aikman
7	Immaterial Considerations
8	In Focus – Adaptive Reuse: Between Heritage and Climate - Ross McFarlane
9	In Practice – NatureScot’s Developing with Nature Guidance - Simon Brooks

## RTPI Scotland Awards for Planning Excellence 2023

10	Overall Winner - Zetland Park Project - Falkirk Council
11	Best Plan: Winner - Aberdeen Net Zero Routemap - Aberdeen City Council
12	Young Planner of the Year: Winner - Sarah Purves - Fife Council
13	Best Project: Winner - University of Glasgow Western Campus - University of Glasgow
14	Planning Authority of the Year: Winner - Strategic Place Planning Service - Aberdeen City Council
15	Best Plan: Shortlist - Aberdeen City Centre & Beach Masterplan - Aberdeen City Council and Glasgow Liveable Neighbourhood - Arcadis and Collective Architecture
16	Best Project: Shortlist - Primrose Place, Alloa - Clackmannanshire Council and The Vinery Banff - Aberdeenshire Council
17	Best Project: Shortlist - Stockingfield Bridge - Glasgow City Council and Antonine Wall project - West Dunbartonshire Council
18	Planning Authority of the Year: Shortlist - Fife Council and Young Planner of the Year: Shortlist - Pippa Robertson

## Updates

19	RTPI Update
20-21	Scottish Government
22	SYPN Update
23	RTPI Contacts
24	Directory

## Editorial

Welcome to the summer 2023 edition of the *Scottish Planner*, which is also an opportunity for me to introduce myself as RTPI Scotland’s new Policy, Practice and Research Officer. I’ve worked for the RTPI for over three and half years; first in the role of Policy and Networks Adviser and then as Research Officer. But I am delighted to join the RTPI Scotland team during this busy time for the planning profession. The National Planning Framework 4 has now been formally adopted by the Scottish Government. We have new Local Development Planning Guidance. And a raft of other guidance documents are beginning to emerge around local living, community engagement, and the appointment of chief planning officers. Also, since the last issue of the magazine, Humza Yousef has become Scotland’s First Minister, and Joe FitzPatrick has been appointed to the role of Minister for Local Government Empowerment and

Planning. We look forward to continuing to work proactively with Members of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government as we move into the implementation phase of NPF4.

Planning has a key role to play in delivering the Scottish Government’s ambitions, and we were delighted to hear this recognized by Joe Fitzpatrick in his speech at the RTPI Scotland Awards for Planning Excellence. 26 submissions were received, 13 finalists were selected, and 5 winners were announced at the Awards ceremony in Glasgow on 15 June. With NPF4 moving into the delivery phase, I can’t think of a better time to celebrate the on-the-ground accomplishments of planning and planners, and to showcase the outstanding projects that demonstrate the power of planning to create high quality places.

Jenny Divine  
Co-editor

# Convenor's Comments: Planning's New Future



**Kirsty Macari MRTPI,**  
RTPI Scotland  
Convenor, Co-Head  
of Undergraduate  
(Architecture &  
Urban Planning/  
Contemporary Art  
Practice) at DJCAD,  
University of Dundee

**Kirsty Macari MRTPI, RTPI Scotland Convenor, Co-Head of Undergraduate (Architecture & Urban Planning/ Contemporary Art Practice) at DJCAD, University of Dundee, sheds light on the significance of Scotland's planning community whilst reflecting on the recent RTPI Scotland Awards for Planning Excellence 2023 and the ongoing support from the Scottish Young Planners Network.**

As planners we are good at getting our head down, working hard and dealing with everything from the straightforward to the downright complex. We are solution focussed, committed, adaptable and resilient. We see this in the current consultations that are

**“ The variety of projects was fantastic but the sense of pride from those in the room was what stood out the most.”**

being responded to by planners across the country in relation to the Scottish Government Review of Permitted Development Rights; Effective Community Engagement in Local Development Planning Guidance; and Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods; Draft Planning Guidance. However, occasionally we forget to stop and take time to celebrate and reflect on the current work underway or the journey that we have been on in Scotland to get to where we are today.

It was a privilege to celebrate with the winners and nominees of the RTPI Scotland Awards for Planning Excellence 2023 in June. The variety of projects was fantastic but the sense of pride from those in the room was what stood out the most. I am confident that the knowledge sharing that happened, both in the room and that continued into the early hours, continues to show the special position

that we find ourselves in here in Scotland, a community the size of a nation. As reflective practitioners we need to use that community now more than ever as we learn from the experiences of others; not just what has worked and what we celebrate but in what challenges were met along the way on the journey to success. That shared network of continuous learning is vital. A network that continues to go from strength to strength is the Scottish Young Planners Network who this year celebrate being 20 years old. The support that they give to each other is evident with the variety of events and list of individuals that have volunteered

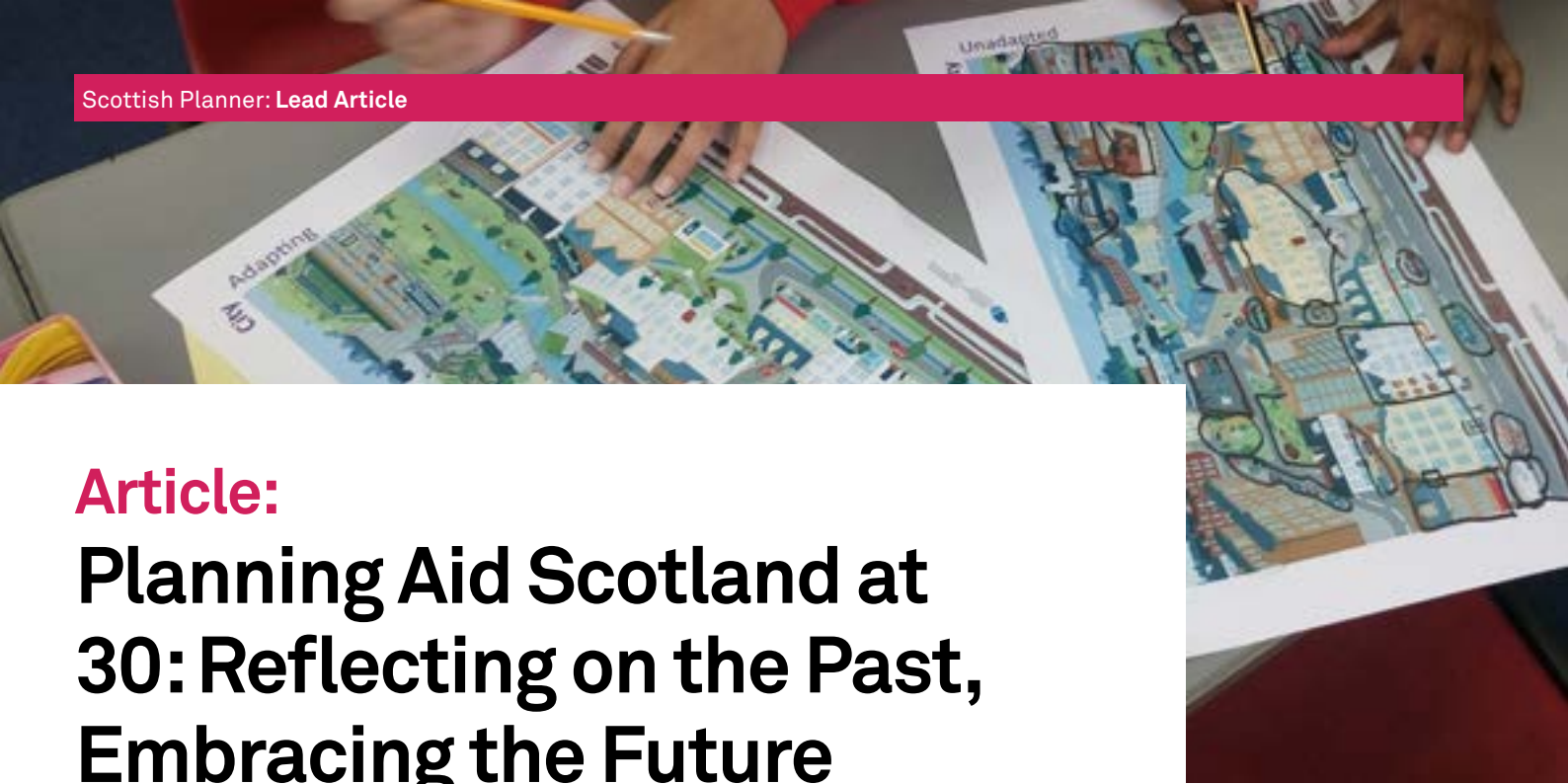
their time over the years, a list too many to include here. The belief in learning and development, to me, is at the core of what they do and goes far beyond that of meeting CPD requirements. As a support network they nurture the future planners and I am delighted to see the work they are doing to ensure that the graduates of tomorrow will be ready for the workplace including support sessions and mock interviews.

When we come together to try a different approach, we see the

benefits of what that can bring. Sarah Purves, named Scottish Young Planner of the Year 2023, is an example of that. A nurturing local authority (Fife Council) who spotted an individual with the determination, positivity and can-do attitude needed to succeed within planning. Her alternative route seen Sarah supported to work in practice part time whilst undertaking her studies at University of Dundee. The ripple effect of her knowledge transferring from practice to classroom and vice versa is evident to all who meet Sarah. The ability to look at the journey differently, with a little disruption by all parties, sees success delivered.

Do different, do disruption, do delivery! ■





## Article:

# Planning Aid Scotland at 30: Reflecting on the Past, Embracing the Future

As the organisation approaches its 30th anniversary this Autumn, we ask **Johanna Boyd**, Chief Executive of Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) what the future holds for PAS and inclusive community engagement.

### Changing times at Planning Aid Scotland (PAS)

Many of you are likely familiar with our mission at PAS to help people understand and navigate the planning system, and to shape the future of their communities. Thanks to our network of volunteers (including many of you reading this – thank you!) we provide impartial advice as an educational charity on planning matters to members of the public, community groups, and business start-ups.

And through our social enterprise activity, we also offer skills training for elected members, planners, and community groups, and actively support communities in creating their own community-led plans. Our key focus is on supporting seldom heard groups (such as children and young people) and marginalised communities experiencing poverty and deprivation.

We are in a period of significant transformation in the planning system in Scotland, which happens to coincide with a phase of change and renewal for PAS as we approach our 30th anniversary.

In October 2022, we welcomed our new Chief Executive, Johanna Boyd. She holds dual qualifications as an English barrister and Scottish solicitor, specialising in planning, local government and equality law. Outside the world of planning, Johanna has held a number of notable roles, including being the first woman to lead Stirling Council and the youngest Council Leader in Scotland at the time. As Council Leader, Johanna helped

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**“Capacity building is key to help set up communities for success when it comes to LPPs. We want to see these plans empower all of our communities. We cannot assume that people understand the planning system. It’s important for us to raise awareness, share knowledge and skills so that all communities are in a position to create their own plans.”**



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**Johanna Boyd**, Chief Executive of Planning Aid Scotland

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secure the City Region Deal for Stirling. She subsequently worked with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission to build equality best practices into City Region Deals. Johanna joined PAS from the Government, Regulation, and Competition team at leading law firm, Brodies LLP.

Johanna comments, “As the planning system continues to undergo a period of intense transformation, I am fortunate to be leading a talented, dedicated and creative team here at PAS, expert in the planning system and community engagement. I am committed to making sure we do all we can to support groups whose voices go unheard and marginalised communities suffering deprivation.”

Two more individuals have joined our team recently – Iain MacPherson who takes up the new post of Director of Operations and Kim Kendall who joins as Communications Officer – reflecting the increasing demand for our services. We’ve also seen change in the makeup of our Board of Directors and are currently looking for new members to help shape the strategic direction of our organisation.

The transformation under way within the planning system presents creative challenges and opportunities for us all. Let’s take a look at some of the key issues on the horizon.

### Digital planning

The Scottish Government’s Digital Transformation programme aims to revolutionise the planning system. The Digital Planning programme has five key missions – of particular interest to our work is the emphasis on unlocking and sharing data, promoting innovation, and utilising digital tools to foster collaboration and engagement.

Pre-pandemic, we used a variety of digital engagement techniques in our work with children and young people. When the pandemic hit, we quickly shifted to delivering all our services digitally. This allowed us to



develop more inclusive engagement methods. Our recent community-led plan-making and youth engagement projects have all combined the best of in-person and digital engagement methods.

We are pleased to announce our partnership with Geosphere, a digital mapping company that has been supporting community groups in England through their tool, Parish Online. Geosphere is extending its support to communities across Scotland with the Community Mapping Scotland tool, formed through a partnership between Geosphere, PAS and the Improvement Service.

We have also assisted the Scottish Government in recent months to gather user feedback on tools like PlaceBuilder as part of the Digital Transformation programme.

### Inclusive engagement

The combination of digital and in-person engagement helps us to reach out to more communities than ever before. We have always sought to champion seldom-heard voices in the planning system, including our work over the last 15 years with Gypsy/ Travellers, children and young people and others – for example, communities experiencing poverty or geographic disadvantage, as part of our Sustaining Choices active travel project.

Our focus is now on expanding the reach of our Advice Service to further target support towards more disadvantaged communities. This includes supporting all communities to prepare their own Local Place Plans.

#### Local Place Plans

We’re excited to see the roll out of LPPs across the country. It’s an opportunity for the planning and place sectors to help ensure that all communities benefit, not just those with existing capacity and resource. We’ve recently been working with Fife Council to help communities build capacity and skills to prepare their own LPPs, through a mix of training and one-to-one mentoring.

Johanna comments that, “Capacity building is key to help set up communities for success when it comes to LPPs. We want to see these plans empower all of our communities. We cannot assume that people understand the planning system. It’s important for us to raise awareness, share knowledge and skills so that all communities are in a position to create their own plans.”

Earlier this year, we were appointed to the Scottish Borders Council Place Making Framework which aims to support communities prepare LPPs, including the ability for communities to receive direct support from PAS and other organisations.

#### Skills training

Our training efforts extend beyond communities pursuing LPPs. For nearly twenty years, we have provided training

to elected members on Councils. With the implementation of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, councillors are now required to undergo training on planning matters. We look forward to supporting Councils in delivering this training, as well as continuing to provide skills training for community councils and other groups.

During the pandemic, we saw a significant increase in planners undertaking our SP=EED training programme. SP=EED is our free toolkit for effective community engagement in the planning system (available on our website). We have trained several hundred planners, helping them to enhance their engagement skills, including digital engagement methods.

### Partnering for success

Collaboration is at the core of our work, extending to communities, Councils, public bodies, and partners in the wider place sector. Recent successful projects have involved collaborations with Paths for All, Zero Waste Scotland and Sniffer/Adaptation Scotland.

Johanna comments: “The recently adopted National Planning Framework 4 firmly places planning at the forefront of efforts to address and adapt to climate change – and partnership will be key to delivering on this. To that end, we have initiated a new project in collaboration with a community climate change network to develop community-led climate change mapping.”

### Supporting future planners

Six months ago, we launched a Mentoring Scheme, allowing licentiate planners to receive guidance from retired and experienced planners. This scheme not only benefits licentiate planners but also enables them to offer advice to members of the public through our Advice Service, supported by their mentors. The pilot phase has received excellent feedback so far and we plan to expand the scheme later this year.

We are also committed to supporting the next generation of planners – and future PAS volunteers! In partnership with Education Scotland and Developing the Young Workforce, we have developed a Virtual Work Placement programme for young people. The placement combines learning about the planning system, developing workplace skills and gaining an insight into the third sector.

### Celebrating our 30th anniversary

This Autumn we’ll be moving into our 30th anniversary year and look forward to inviting you to celebrate with us as we take a look back through the archives over the last 30 years – and consider what the future holds for the next 30. We are excited to launch a new look for the organisation to coincide with our anniversary and calendar of events to mark this milestone. Watch this space! ■

## Q&A

# Public Enquiries

**Ian Aikman MRTPI, Chief Planning Officer at Scottish Borders Council and Senior Vice Chair at Heads of Planning Scotland answers our questions.**



**Ian Aikman MRTPI,**  
Chief Planning Officer  
at Scottish Borders  
Council & Senior Vice  
Chair at Heads of  
Planning Scotland

### 1 Who has been the biggest inspiration or influence on your career and why?

There has not been a singular inspiration or influence on my career - the great mentor, so to speak. Rather, I have learnt so much from and been inspired by many people I have worked with. I have been really lucky, benefitting from the willingness of colleagues to share their skills, knowledge and experience. We do not know all the answers, and should always be willing to learn from and share with others.

From some great managers, I saw the benefit of developing a leadership approach. This is based on creating a shared vision and understanding of service objectives, built on trust through open and honest dialogue and working in a collective and collegiate manner. It is vitally important to foster a positive and supportive team dynamic or “esprit de corps”, where all are valued, no matter their position.

### 2 What do you feel is the biggest issue facing planners and planning at the moment?

We have experienced significant pressures on Council budgets and suffered substantial loss of planning staff over the last decade, and these pressures continue. Unless we get full cost recovery for delivering planning services and get new people into the planning profession, it will be extremely challenging to drive the positive culture/societal changes necessary to deliver NPF4’s ambitions and carry out the additional duties in the Planning Act. The demands on planning and planners to deliver, emphasise the need for staff resources, and the skills/knowledge and capacity to meet these expectations.

### 3 Why is planning important?

If I can steal from Sir Patrick Geddes for a moment, planning is essentially about “Place, Work and Folk”. The other triads on his “chart of life” that support this proposition examine feeling, experience, sense, emotion, ideation and imagination. Planning therefore touches and influences all aspects of human experience and existence. This has never been more apparent than now as we seek to combat the existential challenge of the twin global climate change and biodiversity crises.

The Planning Act embeds the principle of planning functioning in the public interest. Planning is both strategic and local and works in the long-term interests of society. It provides a mechanism for reflective decision making, balancing a range of interests for the wider benefit of all. Planning and planners demonstrate daily the importance of co-operation, collaboration and effective partnership working to deliver our collective objectives.

### 4 Where do you think best exemplifies planning’s role in creating great places for people?

There are many examples of projects and schemes promoted by planning teams around the country which have delivered great places. Many have been celebrated in the RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence and Scottish Government’s Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning. However, if I can beg indulgence to reflect on work that my authority are undertaking supporting communities in developing Local Place Plans.

We have a commitment in our staffing resource and budget, through the Borderlands Growth Deal, to help communities develop Local Place Plans and Town Teams. We have carried out community audits and extensive community engagement through meetings and workshops. It has been encouraging

to see the level of public enthusiasm and involvement in the process. To date, 78% of our communities have expressed an interest in developing their own Local Place Plans.

This work has the potential to build trust in planning for communities, which is, a delicate and fragile thing, enabling focus to be directed to the positive opportunities for communities and helping create great places that meet people’s needs. This initiative will help front load the next LDP, hopefully making it more inclusive, with community support.

The theme of Placemaking and Local Place Plans is one that will feature in next year’s HOPS conference in Galashiels, where we will be able to provide greater insight into the work we are doing.

### 5 What do you see as Heads of Planning Scotland’s priorities over the year and why?

This year we have seen the long awaited arrival of National Planning Framework 4. HOPS has taken an active role in challenging, contributing and helping shape NPF4 as it has gone through its various stages. One of our key priorities this year will be focussing our efforts towards its successful implementation.

We will ensure that our collective voice is heard at the highest level through presenting to the Parliamentary Committee, discussions at the High Level Group, dialogue with, and submissions to Scottish Government.

We are also committed to reaching out to a range of stakeholders and professional bodies promoting the need for and willingness to work positively, collaboratively and in the spirit of collective endeavour.

To ensure these objectives are delivered, it is essential that we have a well-funded, resourced and skilled planning system and that is why the themes of (1) fees and resources and (2) the Future Planners programme are critical for us and again these will continue to be active areas for focus this year. ■

# Immaterial Considerations

An irreverent look at the world of planning...

## Never Board of Planning

On leaving RTPi Scotland for pastures new, former Intern Project Officer Nick Springthorpe defied convention by giving his colleagues a leaving present. And what a present it was! Apparently picked up in a charity shop 'The Housing Drive' (pictured) is a board game published by Pepys Games of London in the 1940's and is "a fascinating game of skill and fun for 2 to 8 players." The players race to complete a housing estate using the least government subsidy

possible. Houses are built by, first, obtaining a "Licence to Build" and then blue, red and green counters, representing respectively Units of Labour, Units of Material and Units of Power. You can trade counters with others to complete your housing estates. Each player is provided with a Playing Board representing a Housing Estate and indicating positions for the various pieces used during the game. Suitably complex and a fascinating piece of history too. Though the older planners amongst us may be more used to beetle drives than housing drives!

## Bricking It

We are delighted to have been made aware of a strangely addictive Facebook page that focuses on, er, bricks. The Scottish Brickmarks community provides a platform for people to share photographs and information on bricks that they have come across. It may sound a little dry but the posts contain a lot of historical information and make you realise the different types of bricks that were produced in different parts of Scotland. The photograph pictured is a case in point showing bricks from Glenboig, Boghead (Armadale), Hailes Quarry, Forth (Falkirk) and Dougal (Winchburgh) You can find it at [https://m.facebook.com/ScottishBrickmarks/?\\_tn\\_=%2Cg](https://m.facebook.com/ScottishBrickmarks/?_tn_=%2Cg) And it isn't behind an IT firewall (I'll get my coat..)



## A Weighty Matter

And finally, a word of warning from further afield: new research has discovered that New York City is sinking due to weight of its skyscrapers. Reported recently in the Guardian, the research found that the city is sinking approximately 1-2mm each year on average, worsening effects of sea level rise and flooding threat. Interestingly the researchers have calculated that the city's structures weigh a total of 1.68tn lbs, which is roughly equivalent to the weight of 140 million elephants. You can read the full piece at [https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/may/19/new-york-city-sinking-skyscrapers-climate-crisis?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/may/19/new-york-city-sinking-skyscrapers-climate-crisis?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)



# In Focus:

## Adaptive Reuse - Between Heritage and Climate



Ross McFarlane,  
Urban Planning  
Graduate from  
University of Dundee

**Ross McFarlane** graduated with a first-class MA (Hons) Urban Planning from the University of Dundee on 22 June 2023. The research discussed has been the culmination of this year's independent research study. He has a strong passion for urban planning as a key tool in the sustainable development of the world's places and engaging with others. Ross won the RTPI (Scotland) Award for his dissertation and the RTPI Student Award this year.

With the climate crisis worsening and the UK Government's plans to tackle it being heavily criticised, it is vital that viable solutions are found. The impacts of the climate emergency are felt on Scotland's built and natural environments. Whilst we recognise the importance of protecting Scotland's vast stock of heritage buildings from climate change, it is harder to see the role they can also play in the fight against it. Of which, the process of adaptive reuse is key.

Being a sustainable process through its retention of embodied carbon, it also conserves the character and heritage of places. Although Scotland has a vast stock of heritage buildings and prides itself on its commitment to the fight against climate change, there is little mention of adaptive reuse in this fight. Being a relatively new topic, which is gaining increasing attention from academics, developers, and the public alike, a research gap was identified.

The research investigated this gap and explored the question:

Is adaptive reuse being effectively facilitated and utilised to aid in improving the impact heritage buildings have on reducing climate change, whilst also preserving the character of places in Scotland?

Data was gathered through a literature review, semi-structured interviews with planning and built environment specialists, and an analysis of current Scottish policy and guidance. This allowed for the perceptions of

the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, both globally and in Scotland to be identified, and investigated how effective current Scottish policy and guidance is in making it a positive option for planners and developers alike.

The research found that adaptive reuse was perceived positively although several barriers were uncovered. A disposable mindset and culture were believed by many interviewed, to be the root of barriers such as:

- a lack of economic viability,
- rigid and unsupportive planning policy,
- disincentivising fiscal policy (20% VAT on Reuse vs. 0% for demolition and reconstruction),
- inaccessible guidance, and
- a lack of "holistic" guidance.

To overcome these barriers, opportunities were identified that informed the research recommendations, including:

- creating holistic guidance for the adaptive reuse process, including the development of a decision-making process,
- removing, or reducing the 20% VAT placed on the reuse of buildings,
- creating a website which would include all current guidance on adaptive reuse in one place,
- making planning policy more flexible, and
- creating a new national policy, specifically aimed at facilitating adaptive reuse.

To assist the decision-making process, four key guiding principles were identified.



These are,

- Accessible for All,
- A Collaborative Approach,
- All in One Place, and
- Adaptive.

Through the recommendations made, including the development of a decision-making process, the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, which is currently under facilitated and underutilised, can contribute to creating a society which puts reuse first. This would encourage moving away from the unnecessary demolition of heritage buildings and towards making adaptive reuse the norm. By saving embodied carbon and protecting the buildings which make up the fabric of Scotland's society, adaptive reuse will help greatly in adapting the past to survive the future. ■



# In Practice:

## NatureScot's Developing with Nature Guidance



**Simon Brooks,**  
Strategic Planning  
Manager at  
NatureScot

**Simon Brooks, Strategic Planning Manager at NatureScot, discusses new NatureScot guidance which aims to support local developments and secure positive biodiversity outcomes in compliance with Policy 3(c) of NPF4.**

NatureScot published new guidance alongside NPF4 in February, in support of Biodiversity Policy 3(c). This policy applies to most local development, with the exception of householder applications and those subject to EIA. Its requirement for development to include “appropriate measures” that conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity strengthens the previous SPP’s approach, and Developing with Nature will help applicants deliver this.

While Policy 3(c) addresses the smaller scale of development, the circa 13,000 p.a non-householder applications can make

**“ The intention is to demonstrate that any development can do something positive for nature, if opportunities are considered from an early stage”**

a significant contribution to tackling the biodiversity crisis. But relatively few of these applications will engage ecological expertise, so the Guidance attempts to fill that gap by providing an uncomplicated approach and set of measures for enhancing biodiversity. Presented in a straightforward way for both the professional and lay reader.

The Guidance presents seven principles for integrating biodiversity with the development, so that it is considered in the round and with opportunities for delivering wider objectives maximised. These principles include considering biodiversity from the outset, providing for synergies and habitat connectivity, taking a placed based approach

and securing the measures for the long term.

The bulk of the guidance details 24 relatively simple measures for enhancing nature. This is not an exhaustive list of all potential enhancements, but is focused on those most relevant to local development that are applicable across much of Scotland. Their complexity ranges from something as simple as providing a home for bees or bats, through planting a meadow or orchard, to constructing a green wall or living roof.

For each of the measures the Guidance describes what it is and the nature benefits it provides, the physical conditions and future management needed if it is to be successful, other measures it complements, and web links to detailed design and management advice.

The intention is to demonstrate that any development can do something positive for nature, if opportunities are considered from an early stage. This should include not just the garden and greenspace elements of the development, but also the buildings and structures to be built, the borders and boundaries partitioning the site, and the management of rain and surface water.

When identifying enhancement opportunities, supporting plans and strategies should be checked. This includes any Local Biodiversity Action Plan, but also the LDP and associated strategies, and local environmental record centre information.

To ensure measures suited to the development and its site are selected, a checklist of six ecological factors and four practical factors are set out. Ecological considerations include: thinking about local native species; providing for connectivity;

allowing space for nature to adapt (which is increasingly relevant in the face of climate change); taking account of synergies with other measures; and providing multiple units where appropriate (such as a cluster of swift boxes).

Practical considerations to take into account include: how nature and people will interact once the development is occupied (to avoid disturbance and conflict where possible); how longer-term management will be guaranteed; identifying opportunities for local community engagement (such as through installing and managing measures, or undertaking surveys); and maximising wider benefits at the same time, such as water and temperature regulation and other nature based solutions.

Policy 3(c) requires development to deliver measures that are proportionate to its nature and scale, and the Guidance sets out five factors to consider. These include the location, character and scale of the development, future management requirements, the biodiversity lost to the development and the time and uncertainty in delivering benefits. A simple template is also provided for the applicant to present the information demonstrating that biodiversity will be enhanced.

The Developing with Nature Guidance can be downloaded from the [NatureScot website](#).





## Article: Overall winner

### Zetland Park Project, entered by Falkirk Council.

The Zetland Park Project is an exemplar of community driven, local authority enabled place making focused park regeneration. It has delivered above and beyond its original proposals and achieved its main objective: to rejuvenate Portonian (collective noun for Grangemouth People) Pride. To achieve this at any time is a commendable success, to achieve this entirely throughout Covid and multiple national lockdowns, price increases and supply issues is remarkable. At a time of global change and re-evaluation, this project has reaffirmed that heritage projects can make a massive difference to people's wellbeing and lives as well as their quality of place.

Zetland Park was gifted to the people of Grangemouth by the Earl of Zetland in 1882 and has formed the green heart of Grangemouth ever since. The park, which today extends to 18.5ha, has an imposing Category B listed war memorial designed by Sir John Burnet at its northern apex and in its heyday contained: ornamental rose and fountain gardens, a bandstand and sports

pavilion, a boating pond and a paddling pool and an extensive children's play area. By the mid 2010's the park was in decline: the pond was drained and derelict; the paddling pool had been demolished; the fountain had lost its upper tier and stopped working; the rose garden was saturated due to a rising water table and the bandstand had been removed. Local community group The Friends of Zetland Park were determined to foment the park's renaissance and approached the Council in 2014 to see what could be done. In 2014, a park masterplan was prepared following extensive consultation and approved by Falkirk Council in 2015 and its implementation was identified as a top local priority in the Council's Open Space Strategy.

The park masterplan was revised, consulted on and re-approved by April 2019. This led to refurbishment of the war memorial gardens; conservation and re-instatement of the cast iron fountain and regeneration of the surrounding garden; transformation of the derelict boating pond into a wildlife pond; creation of a new performance stage and events space; regeneration of the park's play area into a fully inclusive heritage themed play area; redevelopment of the rose garden into a climate resilient ornamental rain garden; creation of a floodlit pump track alongside the existing cycle skills track; development of a bike library; creation of a heritage themed human sundial as well as path works and soft landscape improvements.

#### *The judges said:*

*"The Zetland Park Project is an exemplar of how to take a truly holistic approach to placemaking driven hand in hand by community members and planners. It covers the full gamut of planning such as creative and immersed community and stakeholder collaboration, to plan making and visioning, onto project management and delivery, always with a keen eye on what difference the park can make to people's lives. The emphasis on accessibility for all users of the park was at the project's heart and embedded throughout. The project contains a range of outcomes – often with different audiences – but the masterplan approach has enabled sense of coherence across all of them to make the sum of their parts a wonderful experience for all visitors. We were also very impressed with the future proofing and future-casting that was part of this project which will go some way to ensure that it achieves a sustainable and lasting legacy for the people of Grangemouth."*



**Zetland Park Project,**  
Falkirk Council

# Article: Best Plan - Winner



**Aberdeen Net Zero Routemap, entered by Aberdeen City Council.**

**Aberdeen Net Zero Routemap, Aberdeen City Council**

As a city at the heart of the global energy sector, a just energy transition is a vital priority for Aberdeen. Through creation of a Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap, sectors from across the city have co-created a pathway leading the way towards a net zero Aberdeen by 2045. Strong collaboration is at the core of these net zero ambitions, recognising that climate change is a challenge that will affect us all and can't be solved by one organisation alone. In response to these drivers, the need for a cohesive approach that could better inform the city plans was identified

of the UK which will impact Aberdeen. It is accompanied by 6 enabling strategies covering the priority themes relevant to a net zero transition for Aberdeen. These themes seek to address mobility and buildings, develop a circular economy, protect and enhance our natural environment and boost empowerment.

Delivery of the route map will require a collective citywide effort for all of Aberdeen. Partnership activity is now driving forward plans and actions, combining local knowledge, resources, and expertise for the most appropriate solutions for the city. Net Zero Aberdeen will therefore need to be iterative and ready to adjust to changing drivers and opportunities, expanding new technology, increasing innovation and building skills and capacity.

**“Strong collaboration is at the core of these net zero ambitions, recognising that climate change is a challenge that will affect us all and can't be solved by one organisation alone.”**

*The judges said:*

*“The Net Zero Aberdeen routemap tackles one of the most serious issues we face. Given this it is very encouraging to hear that the City Council, working with a range of other partners, is keen to tackle this head on and to transition Aberdeen from an ‘oil city’ to one more focused on renewable energy. The routemap needs to be collaborative and draw on the resources, skills and abilities of a range of council departments, other public sector bodies, third sector organisations and the private sector. This approach is ground breaking and done well. It goes well beyond planning, but we were very pleased to see that planners were at the heart of the development of the routemap and will be integral to its delivery, its implementation and its progression. The place-based approach is embedded within it and will be key to its advancement.” ■*

by Aberdeen City Council's Strategic Place Planning service. This led to the development of the Net Zero Aberdeen project.

The process of developing Net Zero Aberdeen included a review of the range of new and emerging policy drivers, examining how these relate to the development of action for the city. Work took place to identify the challenges relevant to the city in making a transition to net zero. Following this, stakeholders were involved in developing strategic approaches to addressing these challenges. The project's Leadership Board and Delivery Unit are therefore formed of representatives of organisations that are based or work in Aberdeen.

The Routemap outlines most of the key net zero related milestones across all levels



# Article: Young Planner of the Year - Winner



Sarah Purves, Fife Council.

Sarah Purves MRTPI,  
Town Planner,  
Fife Council

Sarah is a dedicated, enthusiastic Planning Officer working in Fife Council's Planning Service. She joined from high school on a trainee planning assistant internship, progressing successfully within various roles. She now plays an integral role in the Major Business & Priority Team. She also leads on

and Major Business team, assisting Fife's top 100 businesses through the Development Management process. This technical experience then allowed her to then gain the experience to secure a Planning Officer role within the same team.

Whilst Sarah is an excellent planner, with a strong technical knowledge that allows her to excel within her current role, she also has the interpersonal skills to back this up. In particular, she has excellent organisational skills and is an effective communicator - allowing her to work collaboratively with key stakeholders and deliver timely outputs under pressure. She is also a dependable, accountable team player, setting aside time

for extra-curricular professional and personal development activities that benefit the wider service. This includes her involvement in the Planning Service's 'Living-Well Locally'. She facilitated interactive workshops with young primary school children to help them to understand 20-minute neighbourhoods and identify 'what made their community great' that assisted Policy colleagues place-based policy formation.

Sarah has taken an active role in leading the Planning Service's secondary school and college outreach programme - liaising with teaching professionals to expand inter-council learning for social-science students within Fife. She also attends workshops with local students to tell her story about becoming a planner and encourage them to consider the profession. As part of this, she emphasises the diverse opportunities available to school leavers to enter the profession, stressing the benefit of internships and entry level positions,

especially within Fife, alongside part-time study which should be seen as a valuable alternative to the standard full-time university route. This led to her working with RTPI Scotland on World Town Planning Day, presenting a slot in their 'Through the Years, Across the Globe'.

Sarah also set up Fife Council's APC training and professional development programme which provides regular feedback sessions assisting RTPI chartered candidates preparing for their APC. She has become a role model for not only junior members of staff within the Service but also younger members of the community where she presents the benefits of entering the profession and being surrounded by a team of dedicated and passionate planning professionals.

#### *The judges said:*

*"Sarah's absolute passion for planning shines through everything that she does. Her dedication and commitment to promote and support planning as a profession knows no bounds, be that in setting up initiatives to support others in the planning service, working with her local scout group on the beach to explore how to create new places or relating her story to inspire others to become planners. The route she has taken will not always have been easy but her resilience, level headedness and organisational skills have seen her through the challenges and her enthusiasm has never seemed to dim. She has shown her creativity and is a gifted communicator, whilst her technical skills have been recognised and used to best effect in her impressive career path. Sarah is a perfect role model for young planners across Scotland, and the wider world."* ■

**"Sarah's absolute passion for planning shines through everything that she does. Her dedication and commitment to promote and support planning as a profession knows no bounds..."**

the St Andrews West Strategic Development Area, negotiating place-based outcomes for various development proposals in delivering overarching spatial principles for the area. She is a keen advocate for non-standard entry into the planning profession (alternatives to full time study) and also leads Fife's APC CPD programme, advising colleagues through the RTPI APC process.

Sarah's journey into the planning profession has been varied and rewarding since leaving school. She originally joined Fife's Planning Service in 2015 on a short-term trainee planning technician internship after leaving high school. Entering this programme, she benefited from a diverse range of experience and outputs, further refining her planning interests. Following this, she began a day-release study programme on an RTPI-accredited course at Dundee University whilst continuing her role within Fife Council. Upon graduation, Sarah secured a role as a Graduate Planner in the Priority

## Article: Best Project - Winner

**University of Glasgow Western Campus,  
entered by University of Glasgow.**

The University of Glasgow is investing £1.3 billion to create a sustainable, world-class urban quarter that integrates into the social and cultural fabric of Glasgow, with support from a Masterplan focused on placemaking. The development, one of the UK's largest, aims to bring people together in a dynamic environment to stimulate research and foster greater integration between academics, local communities, and businesses. The first building delivered is the Mazumdar-Shaw Advanced Research Centre, which acts as the creative and collaborative heart of research at the university. The £118m building helps bridge boundaries between research, cross-subject collaboration, and true societal impact.

The Western Campus Development has transformed the West End of Glasgow into a new urban quarter, with a focus on creating extensive areas of open space and new access routes to improve connectivity and encourage active travel. For the first time, people are able to walk or cycle directly and seamlessly between Kelvingrove Park through a series of new civic spaces and streets, joining into the existing town centre at Byres Road. The western campus is predominantly car-free with accessible car parking provided at strategic locations and a significant number of bicycle parking throughout the site. The vast majority of visitors will be travelling on foot, so the environment is designed to prioritise pedestrians at all times.

The mixed-use development proposals, supported by a Campus Development Framework and Masterplan, aspire to attain the highest standards in place-making, sustainability, and carbon reduction. The vision is to create a new world-class urban quarter and destination, reconnecting several fragmented neighbourhoods and bringing urban coherence to an area of the West End that has lacked it for the past 120 years due to the ad hoc nature of the former Western Infirmary Hospital. The University aims to develop the site into a vibrant urban learning and research environment that is integrated into the social, cultural, and physical fabric of Glasgow. The plan is to provide a rich mix of buildings, spaces, and uses that blur the boundaries of where the University begins and ends.

The University of Glasgow's impact extends beyond the economic sphere to encompass a range of social and non-economic outcomes. These outcomes include supporting inclusive economic growth, addressing inequalities, improving social mobility, improving population health and wellbeing, supporting sustainability, and contributing to the local community's sense of place and cultural vitality. The western campus development delivers upon these important attributes making this one of the largest educational developments taking place in the UK.

### *The judges said:*

*"We were extremely impressed with the quality of this project. It brings a sense of place back to the site and this has been driven through a strong masterplan approach. The quality of the architecture is fantastic, and this is complemented and contextualised by the fact that it was been treated as a placemaking project that makes connections between the individual buildings and the spaces that connect them. An emphasis on active and sustainable travel is well demonstrated through providing a pedestrian link through the site to Kelvingrove Park. We are very pleased that planning has played an important role throughout the life of the project and in doing so has brought added value to it. We look forward to the next phases of development."* ■

WINNER



**University of Glasgow  
Western Campus,  
University of Glasgow**

# Article:

## Planning Authority of the Year - Winner



### Strategic Place Planning Service, Aberdeen City Council.

Strategic Planning Service, Aberdeen City Council

Aberdeen City Council's Strategic Place Planning service area includes the physical, social and economic activities used to maintain, regenerate and strengthen the place of Aberdeen. Their focus is to enable, facilitate and deliver effective placemaking across the City. This includes all of the planning, transport, environmental, housing, building, building standards and digital initiatives that will help to deliver major infrastructure projects, meet the outcomes in the City's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and help strengthen the wider economy of Aberdeen and City Region.

The service works on the premise that their work as planners is not done in a vacuum and that there is a responsibility on planners to promote a nature positive and carbon negative future. It comprises of interrelated teams with great aspirations for positive change. It is led by a Chief Officer who is supported by a Senior Management Team made up of Service Managers representing Policy & Strategy, Development Management, Building Standards and Climate and Environment Policy. Each Service Manager is responsible for a number of different teams,

each of which is led by an experienced team leader who is a subject specialist in their individual area.

Team membership is a melting pot of different backgrounds, including public sector, private sector, home grown talent, secondees, modern apprentices and subject specific specialists. They adapt working practice ensuring no customer is excluded or disadvantaged. The team is diverse in its make-up, reflecting the city it serves.

Officers within the service reflect a virtuous circle of competence, where the focus is on sharing best practice, joint problem solving and providing opportunities to continuously improve. Reflection is continuous, and customer feedback, complaints and compliments are considered by a working group with representatives from across the whole service. Peer review is carried out within the service, across the Council and with external local authorities and partners also. The Strategic Place Planning service has a keen focus on customer service and has been successful in independent accreditation of the Customer Service Excellence award for the last 10 years.

The service has responsibility for delivering multi-disciplinary projects and environments, leading on key projects that require a diverse set of skills and which have Equality, Diversity and inclusivity at their heart. These include the redevelopment of Union Terrace Gardens, embedding the principles of being a Child Friendly City, the redevelopment of Aberdeen Art Gallery and working with key groups such as the Accessibility City Transport Users Partnership.



#### The judges said:

*"The particularly impressive aspect of Aberdeen City Council's Strategic Place Planning Service is in the way that it is positioned as part of the authority's broader commissioning model. This has enabled planners and the planning service to be used as truly corporate services, leading on a number of council priorities and projects, and, to be the lead service on place-based approaches and initiatives. It has placed planning at the centre of the local authority so that it is seen as an enabler that is engaged early rather than something that is brought in late in the day. On top of this, the service's leadership has helped to create a can-do attitude and problem-solving approach amongst staff and is committed to supporting them to be the best version of themselves. This appears to have resulted in a real sense of pride amongst staff in what they do, what they aim to achieve and in working for the Council."* ■



# Article: Best Project - Shortlist

## Aberdeen City Centre & Beach Masterplan, entered by Aberdeen City Council and Glasgow Liveable Neighbourhoods, entered by Arcadis and Collective Architecture.



**Aberdeen City Centre & Beach Masterplan,**  
Aberdeen City Council

**Glasgow Liveable Neighbourhoods,**  
Arcadis & Collective Architecture

### Aberdeen City Centre & Beach Masterplan entered by Aberdeen City Council

The Aberdeen City Centre & Beach Masterplan is a new type of masterplan for Aberdeen City Council: a ‘live’ strategic document, updated annually, to examine priorities in the context of changing political, social and economic pressures. The Masterplan sits as a responsive, place-led, overview of other masterplanning exercises in Aberdeen’s central core to provide a holistic picture and to ensure site specific projects and priorities, some of which could otherwise be taken forward by the local authority through its permitted development powers, analysed in the context of wider environmental and economic sustainability. The Masterplan came on the back of a stakeholder engagement exercise entitled “The Future of Aberdeen City Centre and the Beach”. The engagement was based around a simulator tool and it returned over 7,500 responses. The desire to better connect Aberdeen’s City Centre and adjacent beachfront were expressed in the top priorities coming out of this exercise. This, in part, reflected a greater appreciation of Aberdeen’s beachfront during the height of the pandemic as people actively sought out open aired natural environments which could provide space for outdoor leisure, exercise and reflection.



### The Judges said:

*“We really liked the way in which the City Council had developed the masterplan using the simulator tool which allowed people to have an overview of the issues, challenges and opportunities and provide their views on what should happen. The tool also highlighted those people and groups who hadn’t been involved fully in the consultation and this allowed the city council to fill these gaps. We are impressed with the way the document is live and that there will be an annual update to allow for measuring progress and to highlight what needs to be adapted. The strategic nature of the document provides coherence and a sense of direction for decision making to allow stakeholders across the projects to work towards a common goal.”*

### Glasgow Liveable Neighbourhoods entered by Arcadis and Collective Architecture

Production of two Liveable Neighbourhood Plans to create 20-minute neighbourhoods that celebrate and embed the communities needs of high quality, future-ready and people first design. The bottom-up approach to placemaking adopted by the project team has presented the voices of Glaswegian communities. This celebrates the complexity of each neighbourhood and embraces the diversity of needs among different communities, putting people and environment at the heart of the urban agenda. The transparent approach facilitates community buy-in for implementation, behavioural change, secures investment, contributes to health and social equity and boosts the local economy delivering benefits for present and future Glaswegians.

The Liveable Neighbourhoods design toolkit provides a community and place-based approach for revitalisation and transformation of Glasgow, seeking to create an inclusive network of accessible neighbourhoods with enhanced public space and integrated green

infrastructure. The toolkit presents four key themes: Local Town Centres, Everyday Journeys, Active Travel and Streets for People. Using the toolkit an initial list of 100 opportunities were identified for each area based on input from community consultation. This list was reduced further to produce opportunities for each area.

### The judge’s said:

*“This is a great project which is resulting in positive change at the local level which has been very much informed by the people who live there. The level and creative means of community and stakeholder engagement is impressive as has been the flexible approach taken which has seized opportunities to work with local people within their communities. We like how this bottom-up approach had a focus on delivering local living through 20 minute neighbourhoods and how these can be made to work in reality. We were impressed by the range of project plans that had been developed, some of which had resulted in immediate and direct funding, with others providing the case for investment and funding.”* ■



# Article:

## Best Project - Shortlist

**Primrose Place, Alloa** entered by Clackmannanshire Council and **GrowBanff@TheVinery** entered by Aberdeenshire Council.

### Primrose Place, Alloa entered by Clackmannanshire Council

The development represents a partnership approach to housing-led town centre regeneration, based on place principles. Re-developing this vacant space in Alloa town centre has been done in a manner that supports the health and well-being of not only the residents of the new flats but the town itself. It has gone beyond “good enough” in respect of creating a healthy living environment in the flats and communal spaces but applied the same principles and standards to fixing the surrounding public realm. This was achieved through meaningful community engagement and a range of professionals prepared to do things better.

The Council's Planning Service took the



lead in both shaping the new development and design and delivery of grant-funded projects. They identified the potential to transform the town centre, delivering on health and well-being with a place-based approach. Two key steps taken by the Planning Service were to engage with the local third sector and town centre business community in launching public consultation on the town centre using the Place Standard tool, and; reaching out to Architecture & Design Scotland for support in raising design standards, bringing stakeholders together and identifying actions to support the housing.

### The judges said:

*“This is a very good example of a development where planners have provided added value by thinking beyond the normal. It was good to see how planners had looked at the project within a ‘Town Centre First’ framework to ensure that it was seen as part of a broader place where it can contribute to increasing the vibrancy of the centre. We were taken by the social benefits that were accrued through the development and the way in which it had ensured that particular groups had been engaged in shaping the development so as to ensure that it met their needs. The development has brought an important site back into productive use as part of the broader approach to support Alloa to thrive in the future.”*

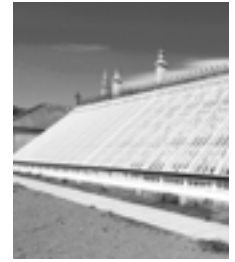
### GrowBanff@TheVinery entered by Aberdeenshire Council

GrowBanff@TheVinery is improving health and wellbeing, increasing skills, and reducing social isolation. This is being achieved through a peppercorn lease awarded through an open call to Aberdeen Foyer who opened the building in July 2022, utilising the refurbished glasshouse as a growing and wellbeing space, the bothy as a kitchen and café/meeting space to provide opportunities for people with low skills and aspirations, or poor mental or physical health to attend training, learning, and volunteering sessions. Through this model Aberdeen Foyer are already exceeding project targets, quickly becoming a focus for community activity, and truly transforming lives.

The Vinery is prominently situated within Banff and is a gateway site to the town centre and sits within the Banff Conservation Area. A Banff Locality Planning exercise identified that 75% of people felt the condition and deterioration of buildings was a negative characteristic. A tripartite approach was



**Primrose Palace, Alloa,** Clackmannanshire Council



**GrowBanff@TheVinery,** Aberdeenshire Council

adopted to maximise the potential of the derelict building. A community willing to see change and a third sector partner able to realise the community's vision, Aberdeenshire Council worked in partnership with the community and the Scottish Government to transform the site into a flagship, garden gateway to Banff.

### The judge's said:

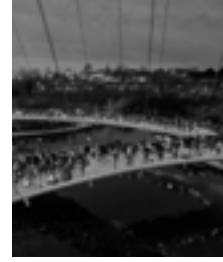
*“We were very impressed with the way in which a derelict, unused historic building had been transformed into a place that was doing so much good for people's health in Banff and the surrounding areas. This is now a very attractive and welcoming hub for social and health activities through its café and through providing a focus for a range of meetings, groups and forums supporting health and wellbeing. It was heartening to see that the renovation of the building was not compromised but rather enhanced, helping to create a sense of place. This was helped through a masterplanning exercise undertaken for the building and its gardens and through planners playing a key role in ensuring integration across players and stakeholders through a place based approach.”* ■





# Article: Best Project - Shortlist

**Stockingfield Bridge** entered by Glasgow City Council and **Rediscovering the Antonine Wall** project entered by West Dunbartonshire Council.



**Stockingfield Bridge,**  
Glasgow City Council



**Rediscovering the Antonine Wall,**  
West Dunbartonshire Council

### Stockingfield Bridge entered by Glasgow City Council

The construction of the Stockingfield Bridge, a three-way pedestrian and cycle bridge at Stockingfield Junction, North Glasgow, is an integral part of a far wider investment programme to promote access and encourage



healthy living in this area of the city. Community engagement has been at the heart of the project with residents and groups helping to shape the design of the structure and its surrounding environment. It is an ambitious £13.7 million project to reconnect three communities in North Glasgow and complete the last linkage in the Forth & Clyde Canal towpath. The construction of a three-way bridge at this location resolves long-term access issues at the Stockingfield Junction, where the canal and road infrastructure have acted as barriers to fulfilling wider aspirations for over 200 years. The introduction of the bridge and associated works has resulted in significant active travel improvements on the canal and has enhanced Glasgow's citywide, off-road path network. The bridge provides an important new connection between the communities of Ruchill, Gilshochill and Maryhill improving access between these communities and opening routes to the leisure and employment opportunities in the west end of Glasgow and the city centre.

### The judges said:

*"This project is an excellent example of how creative thinking has led to a piece of infrastructure being seen as more than getting people 'from a to b'. Stockingfield Bridge now acts as a conduit for bringing together different places and has managed to link three quite disparate communities. Importantly, this has been done with a focus on active and sustainable travel which in itself has allowed for a more inclusive and sustainable approach to engaging people in the design and development. The bridge is a fantastic piece of engineering, but we also liked how the plan is to use it to help foster a sense of place through incorporating public art and spaces."*

### Rediscovering the Antonine Wall project entered by West Dunbartonshire Council

Rediscovering the Antonine Wall is a multi-partner project that has used placemaking to increase awareness of the Antonine Wall World Heritage Site. Led by planners from five local authorities, and partnered with Historic Environment Scotland, the project has created and enhanced places across central Scotland, through the installation of themed play parks, replica distance stones, murals and iconic statues. It has also facilitated community-led placemaking projects. This has been complemented by a full-length film, comic preparation with school children, a creative writing anthology, a travelling museum exhibition, and community outreach including involvement of children and 'New Scots' migrants and refugees.

The genesis for the Rediscovering the Antonine Wall project was the Antonine Wall Management Plan 2014-2019. This included aims and associated actions relating to promoting awareness and understanding of the Antonine Wall, realising its full potential as an education and learning resource, and strengthening engagement

with local communities. In 2016, preparatory work began on what would become the Rediscovering the Antonine Wall project, with a study undertaken to identify what individual elements could form the basis for a project. This study was used to inform a successful bid to the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF) for 'development year' funding'. Following the 'development year', approximately £1M of NHLF was awarded which was complimented by £450,000 of LEADER funding, and £360,000 partner funding.

### The judge's said:

*"This project has been very successful in bringing together a wide number and range of stakeholders to create new a sense of place and coherence across the length of the wall. This is no easy task given its scale and the need to balance the needs and opportunities of different communities. It was great to see planning and planners acting as the glue to bring this all together in a consistent way. We liked the drive behind the project to animate key points along the wall through playparks, public art and information points to provide additional reasons for people to visit and then to find out more about the wall's history and significance: heritage to engage communities and community engagement to increase the enjoyment of heritage."* ■



## Article:

# Planning Authority of the Year - Shortlist and Young Planner of the Year - Shortlist

## Fife Council and Pippa Robertson, Aurora Planning Ltd.

### Planning Authority of the year shortlisted: Fife Council

Fife Planning Authority is one of Scotland's largest Planning Services in Scotland. With 80 staff leading on statutory planning, development management, transportation, climate change and zero waste, and a range of built and natural environment services. Fife Planning prides itself on customer focus, enhancing Fife's places and addressing climate change.

It is a multi-disciplinary Planning Service of 80 staff, 33 of whom are Chartered Town Planners and 4 Licentiates. Over the past seven years, they have developed their Workforce Strategy to better ensure that

meetings, team days, social events, and their annual Service development day. They pride themselves in the quality of their work, always seeking to improve.

### The judges said:

*"It is clear that the Fife Council planning service has a very strong leadership team who have developed and embedded an ethos of customer service, staff support and development and continuous improvement. We were very impressed by the way the service has looked to develop new ways of building a pipeline of planners to support their future ambitions, often introducing innovative and creative approaches and initiatives in doing this. They also have a strong record of supporting and empowering staff. The service takes continuous improvement very seriously, building upon customer and staff feedback, appeal decisions and complaints to drive innovation and excellence in their processes, procedures and good practice."*

### Young Planner of the Year shortlisted: Pippa Robertson

A former solicitor, and then co-founder and Director of Aurora Planning – which was awarded Small Planning Consultancy of the Year 2021 – Pippa has acquired

an excellent reputation as an independent consultant since changing to a career in planning just a few years ago, delivering positive outcomes for our clients while also raising a young child. Her success is founded on her broad and nuanced understanding of the planning system, her ability to build relationships with clients, and the innovative approaches she



Fife Council



Pippa Robertson, Aurora Planning Ltd.

takes to achieve positive outcomes for them. She is particularly committed to delivering community and social benefits, carrying out reduced fee and pro-bono work as part of Aurora Planning and in her own time. She is always eager to share her knowledge and experience by mentoring interns, publishing blogs, contributing to professional publications, and presenting at local and national events. Drawing on her legal background, and her experience in Aurora Planning, Pippa has a specific understanding of planning policy and the planning system, often bringing a different perspective to projects and demonstrating originality of approach, beyond the simple application of policy. An example of this is preparing the planning statement for the UK's first vertical launch spaceport, the ground-breaking nature of which meant there were no precedents to follow.

### The judges said:

*"The impact of Pippa's work speaks for itself. She has shown a real zest for planning and for working with others to develop innovative approaches. She takes a constructive, outcomes focused problem solving approach based on her vision of planning as an enabler of good things. Pippa brings a great set of skills and understating given her legal background and she has used this to good effect. Her commitment to continuous learning and sharing her expertise and experiences with others is admirable and there is no doubt that the people and communities she has worked with – many for free – have benefitted from this. We were very impressed with Pippa's commitment to ensuring others benefit from her experience and her dedication to supporting them to engage positively in the planning system."* ■



the Service is more diverse and provides succession planning opportunities. Fife is proud of their Service culture; being open and honest, supporting one another both in terms of wellbeing and work, and aligning their values to 'How We Work Matters', Fife Council's corporate strategy on what they do and how they do it. The service makes the point of celebrating successes through team

# Update:

## RTPI Update

### Policy Consultations

RTPI Scotland have submitted responses to the following consultations and requests for written evidence:

- Response to '2035 Target for the Amount of Heat to be Supplied by Heat Networks'
- Response to the 'Culture in Communities' Consultation
- Response to the General Advancement of the Community Wealth Building Approach Consultation
- Response to 'Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan' Consultation
- Response to the 'Review of National Outcomes: Call for Evidence'
- Response to Local Living and 20-Minute Neighbourhoods: Draft Planning Guidance Consultation

These are all published on the RTPI website. Consultations currently under consideration are:

- New National Parks – appraisal framework. Deadline 4th August
- Review of Permitted Development Rights – Phase 3. Deadline 23rd August
- Effective Community Engagement in Local Development Planning Guidance. Deadline 13th September
- Proposed Land Ownership and Public Interest (Scotland) Bill. Deadline 12 September
- Review of the Effectiveness of Environmental Governance. Deadline 29th September
- A Human Rights Bill for Scotland: Consultation. Deadline 5th October

### Parliament

Since the last issue of the Scottish Planner RTPI Scotland has appeared before 3 Scottish Parliament Committees.

- on 18 April the Director gave evidence before the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee on Air Quality
- on 2nd May the RTPI Scotland Director gave oral evidence to the Finance and Public Administration Committee Inquiry into public administration and effective Scottish Government decision-making
- on 18 May the Director appeared before the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee as part of their inquiry on Culture in Communities

### Bursaries

RTPI is offering 10 Future Planners bursaries of £2k funded by the Scottish Government Planning, Architecture and Regeneration Division. They are aimed at students on RTPI accredited Planning Masters courses in Scotland to assist with students' course fees and living costs for the academic year 2023-24. The aim of the bursary is to attract diverse talent from a variety of planning-related disciplines and underrepresented backgrounds to study a fully accredited Planning Masters in Scotland and increase the number of qualified planners.

The deadline for submissions is Friday 18 August 2023. Provision of bursaries to successful applicants will be made by the end of September. Find out more at <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/become-a-planner/bursaries/future-planners-bursary-2023-scotland/>

### Digital Planning

As part of our work on developing digital planning skills, RTPI Scotland is currently working with Scottish Government on the creation of a Digital Portal sharing good practice in approaches to digital planning. We are looking for users from different backgrounds, ages, etc. to participate in UAT testing for this. If you are interested in being involved or would like to find out more, email [scotland@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:scotland@rtpi.org.uk)

### RTPI Practitioner Research Fund winner 2021 publishes report on Community Wealth Building

Congratulations to Tim Moss MRTPI on being announced as RTPI Practitioner Research Fund winner 20 and for publishing a report on Community Wealth Building with the Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum (SURF). Tim's research explores the implications of community wealth building policy in planning in Scotland and aims to 'understand the impact of community wealth building (CWB), a local government level policy approach, on existing policy measures in Scotland.' The grant allowed him academic support, funding for numerous site visits, and time to carry out a survey of over 233 local authority staff with over 20 follow up interviews.

You can read a blog on Tim's work at <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/blog/2023/june/rtpi-practitioner-research-fund-winner->

[2021-publishes-report-on-community-wealth-building/ whilst the full report can be accessed at https://surf.scot/new-research-on-land-planning-and-community-wealth-building-in-scotland/](https://www.rtpi.org.uk/blog/2023/june/rtpi-practitioner-research-fund-winner-)

### RTPI to establish Displaced Planners Pathway to Work Fund

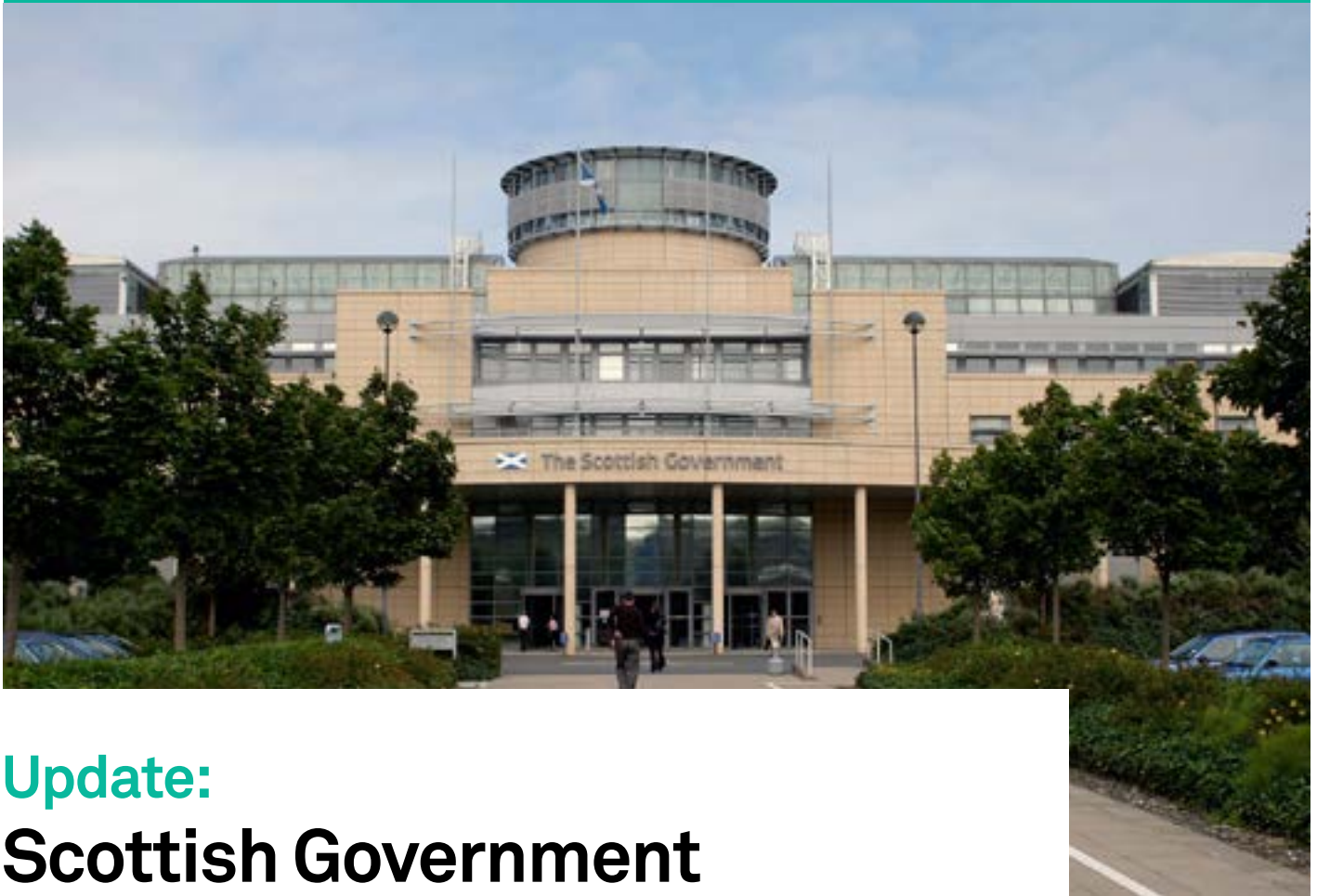
The RTPI Trust has agreed the establishment of a Displaced Planners Pathway to Work Fund worth an initial £20,000, aiming to assist displaced planning professionals in entering the planning profession in the UK and Ireland. The initiative, developed by the RTPI's Chief Executive, will aim to address the increasing number of planning professionals displaced worldwide due to conflicts or natural disasters. Beyond immediate assistance, the RTPI is also committed to planning for the future by supporting initiatives that enable the development of strategies to rebuild places and communities after disasters. You can read more at <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/news/2023/june/rtpi-to-establish-displaced-planners-pathway-to-work-fund/>

### Social Media

The @RTPIScotland Twitter account has 5044 followers and the @ConvenorRTPI account has 1727.

### Craig McLaren

Congratulations to RTPI Scotland's Director, Craig McLaren, for being appointed to the role of Scotland's National Planning Improvement Champion. Craig's last day at the RTPI will be on the 25th of August and he will be taking up this new position at the beginning of September. We would like to thank Craig for being our fearless leader for the last 12 years. He has truly been an inspiration and all of us in the RTPI Scotland team wish Craig all the best in this new role. ■



## Update: Scottish Government

Since the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), our priorities have moved from a period of significant structural change and policy development to focus on maximising the tools, skills and capacity to support delivery. In the coming year we will continue to drive forward progress on our three overarching programmes: delivering planning reform; investing in communities and places; and innovation and creativity.

### National Planning Framework 4

We now have a few months of experience of NPF4 in practice, following on from its adoption and new status as part of the development plan. NPF4 has taken a very clear policy direction, placing the climate and nature crises at the heart of our planning system. We were delighted that it recently received a UK planning award for 'planning to address climate change'.

Work is already progressing well on the actions set out in the [NPF4 Delivery Programme](#). Informal feedback is very welcome to inform the second iteration which we will publish in the autumn.

We recently convened the first meeting [of the Planning, Infrastructure and Place Advisory Group](#), with the support of the Scottish Futures Trust. This is an exciting opportunity to strengthen the links between

planning, infrastructure and place based investment. The next meeting of the group will take place in September.

Over the coming months we will be looking further at an effective and proportionate monitoring programme for NPF4. We recognise that there is ongoing debate about the application of Policy 16: quality homes. We are preparing new guidance on Housing Land Audits, which will help to support the

application of the policy. In the meantime, we are closely monitoring the policy in practice and will continue to work with planning authorities and stakeholders to support the change in culture and practice required to achieve a plan-led approach to housing development that benefits communities and supports our response to housing need and demand.

### Local Development Plans

New [regulations](#) and [guidance](#) on local development plans are now in place, together with related [regulations](#) on Play Sufficiency Assessments. Local development planning will play a critical role in the new system, and we are looking forward to supporting implementation of the new approach in practice. Alongside this, we have issued a consultation on draft [statutory guidance on effective community engagement in development planning](#), which closes on 13 September. Collectively, this largely completes the reform of development planning, enabling planning authorities to proceed with the new suite of place-focused local development plans.

### Permitted Development

We have made significant progress in extending permitted development rights with [Phase 2](#) now in force and [Phase 3 open for consultation](#). Phase 3 includes a focus on small scale renewable energy developments and is designed to support businesses as well as households in response to the cost-of-living crisis. The consultation is open until 23 August.

### Scottish Planning Innovation Awards

We recently launched a rebrand of the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning, now titled the Scottish Planning Innovation Awards. The new awards have been modernised and aligned with National Planning Framework 4. Written paperwork has been replaced with "Digital Stories". [Submissions](#) will close in September, with a celebration in March 2024.

### Ongoing Planning Reform

Following on from the significant reforms of development planning that are now in place, we are continuing to implement wider aspects of the planning reform programme. That includes work now underway on new regulations and guidance to introduce Masterplan Consent Areas, with significant potential to enable and incentivise necessary development, from large infrastructure projects to much smaller-scale, vital local developments.

On 28 June we laid a [Statement](#) in the Scottish Parliament which sets out the

circumstances where the Scottish Ministers will consider calling in a planning application for their own consideration. And in the autumn we will publish guidance to support new requirements around the appointment of Chief Planning Officers by planning authorities. These fulfil duties introduced by Sections 29 and 50 of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

Later this year, we will convene a new advisory group to inform our work on Compulsory Purchase Orders, so that it focuses on improvements that will have the greatest impact. We will also be taking forward some preliminary work to inform regulations for an infrastructure levy, using the enabling power that was introduced by the 2019 Act.

### Digital Transformation

Delivery of our [digital transformation programme](#) continues to progress. Key recent developments include the appointment of suppliers, CapGemini working with StormID, on the new national payment solution for planning and building applications. This marks the start of the 'beta' (build) phase of the new pay solution, and we will be working closely with three partners – Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority, Glasgow City Council and Stirling Council – to develop and implement the solution over the next 9 months. This will initially integrate with the existing eDevelopment service, bringing early value ahead of the full rollout of the new smart application service in early 2025.

We have co-produced a Data Strategy for Planning outlining a roadmap of activities for unlocking the value of planning data, with the potential to make a significant impact on the efficiency of information sharing within the system. As part of this roadmap, work has already begun with partners to clean high priority data needed for the new smart applications service.

The Digital Skills work, led by the Royal Town Planning Institute, is progressing at pace and we are continuing to explore how innovative technological solutions can be developed to support practice in the future. We are currently undertaking a structured review of the programme as a whole, having agreed with the Board that a reset of the approach is required in response to resourcing challenges. Further information on this will be available later in the year.

### Skills

We are working with Heads of Planning Scotland, the Royal Town Planning Institute Scotland and CoSLA / The Improvement Service to take forward recommendations of the Future Planners project and help build

professional capacity. Education has a crucial role to play in this, and so we have committed funding to support 10 bursaries for students undertaking planning education in Scotland and will continue to work with Scotland's planning schools to support new routes into the profession which bring together learning with work-based experience.

We are expanding our own capacity to support the delivery of ScotWind projects and working closely with wider government to develop skills and capacity for handling significant new investment in renewable energy technologies, including hydrogen. This will help accelerate our just transition, increase energy security and attract significant investment in the wider Scottish economy.

This summer, we will publish a consultation on training of elected members. This is a new requirement introduced by the 2019 Act, and we look forward to hearing stakeholders' views on the key areas that should be covered, building on established practices and ensuring elected members are up to date with changes introduced by planning reform.

### Staying In Touch

For the latest messages from the Planning, Architecture and Regeneration Division, follow us on Twitter @ScotGovPlanning and register to receive our Planning and Architecture news updates.■



## Update: Scottish Government

As we rapidly approach the midway point of the year it is once again time to reflect upon the last quarter and all that has happened since we last provided an update on the Scottish Young Planners Network. So, what has the Steering Group been up to?

First and foremost, the SYPN organised the Scottish Young Planners Conference, which was held in Stirling on 27 April 2023. Themed around 'Past, Present and Future', the conference had a varied programme which sought to speak to some of the challenges and opportunities that NPF4 will give us over the next 10 years.

Throughout the day we heard from a number of speakers, including Joe Fitzpatrick MSP – the Minister for Local Government Empowerment and Planning. My own take away from the Ministerial Address was the call for us to view Planning as a Collaborative Exercise, be bold in exercising our Professional Judgement and to be Confident.

At the risk of this update becoming a list like the thanks in an award acceptance speech, I will simply say that the SYPN Steering Group is incredibly grateful to all those involved with making the Conference

such a success whether that be those who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes; the speakers who gave up their time to contribute to such an interesting event; and indeed the 170 attendees who really just made it a such a vibrant event.

More generally the Steering Group continues to work to organise CPD events. As always, we'd encourage young planners to get in touch if they have ideas for future events.

Looking to the future, it is once again that time of year in which we get to congratulate and celebrate all those who are graduating and who are now Young Planners. This really is an exciting time to be coming into planning, the scope of the profession is expanding and I'm sure you will all make valuable contributions in the years to come.

And finally, as we are the Scottish Young Planners Network it would be remiss of us if we did not congratulate the fantastic Sarah Purves who has recently been named Scottish Young Planner of the Year and commend all those who were also shortlisted for the award. **James Hewitt MRTPI, Senior Planner at Aberdeenshire Council and Vice Chair of the Scottish Young Planners' Network 2023.** ■

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**RTPI Scotland**  
Royal Town Planning Institute

## SAVE THE DATE

### Annual Conference 2023

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# Delivering a Digital Future for Planning

.....



on Thursday 5 October 2023  
in Dundee

Digital planning is becoming an increasingly important tool for planning in Scotland. Transforming Places Together: Scotland's Digital Strategy for Planning sets out the Scottish Government's vision to deliver a digitally transformed planning system including missions to unlock the value of planning data, deliver an end-to-end digital planning experience, create the conditions for digital to flourish, use digital tools to drive collaboration and engagement, and, embed a culture of digital innovation.

But what does this look like and what does it mean for planners? This conference will explore this through looking at the potential of digital planning and asking how we can make the most of digital planning. It will also examine the challenges, opportunities and barriers, including a Digital Lab to give hands on interaction of emerging digital tools and resources.

**Save the date now!**